

BUILDING BRIDGES TO AFROCENTRISM: A LETTER TO MY EGYPTOLOGICAL COLLEAGUES

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Inventaire B 10.495.....

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What color were the ancient Egyptians?" This is a question that strikes fear into the hearts of most American Egyptologists, since it so often presages a barrage of questions and assertions from the Afrocentric perspective. Few of us have devoted much thought or research to the contentions of the Afrocentric movement, so we nervously try to say something reasonable, and hope that the questioner won't persist and that we won't end up looking silly or racist or both.

In late 1993, I received a temporary appointment to the faculty of Howard University and began teaching Egyptological subjects to classes that were almost entirely African-American. As a result, I have been dealing with Afrocentric issues on a regular basis, and have spent a good deal of time and energy thinking and talking about them. Since my appointment, many of my Egyptological colleagues at other universities have asked me about Afrocentric sentiment at Howard and my strategies for teaching traditional Egyptology to the students who espouse it. The tone of these inquiries has demonstrated to me both the

curiosity and the discomfort that American Egyptologists feel about Afrocentrism. This attempt to write an account of my impressions is partly inspired by such questions, which I have had difficulty answering cogently in short conversations. More importantly, however, I have come to believe that the Afrocentric movement has a great potential to advance or to damage our field. Which of these directions it takes will depend upon the degree to which traditionally-trained American Egyptologists can come to understand and adapt to its existence. This essay is my attempt to speed that process.

"Afrocentric Egyptology," as practiced today, has an international scholarly literature behind it. (The movement is, if anything, more prominent in France than it is here, to judge from the numerous displays of Afrocentric books and journals I saw in Paris bookshops last summer.) In America, however, Afrocentric Egyptology is less a scholarly field than a political and educational movement, aimed at increasing the self-esteem and confidence of African-Americans by stressing the achievements of African civilizations, principally ancient Egypt. As such, it is

advocated in popular books, textbooks, and even educational posters sponsored by major breweries. It has apparently thus far enjoyed considerable success in its educational aims. As a result, it is being taught to students from grade school through the university level all over America, and its tenets are frequently cited as established fact by the media and the educational estab-

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TOMB 5 REPORT

BY JOAN MEISEL, EDITOR

NEW YORK—During the last week in May, Kent Weeks, Professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo, announced the discovery of at least 50 previously unknown chambers in Tomb 5 in the Valley of the Kings, a tomb he has been excavating since he relocated the entrance in 1987. Weeks is no stranger to the Valley as director of the Theban Mapping Project, which has been affiliated with the American Research Center in Egypt since its inception as the Berkeley Theban Mapping Project. The Project has been working on the west bank opposite Luxor for more than fifteen years, aiming to prepare an accurate archaeological map of the ancient Theban necropolis. By the early 1980's, all of the accessible tombs in the Valley of the Kings had been mapped, but the entrances of a number of non-royal tombs had been filled in early in this century, and the exact locations of many of these had been lost. In the interest of completeness, and with a view to protecting monuments that might lie in the path of proposed touristic improvements, Weeks was prompted to explore the area and attempt to relocate the "lost" tombs.

One of the tombs Weeks particularly wanted to relocate was KV 5, a tomb suggested to be that of the sons of Ramesses II. This tomb had been noted as early as the Napoleonic expedition in 1799 and was first described by James Burton in 1820. Burton had also drawn the only existing plan which recorded 9 chambers and showed that the tomb had a very unusual plan. The tomb was known to be in the area of the parking lot and its relocation and its exact posi-



Dr. Kent Weeks examines relief of the God Osiris in Tomb 5 main corridor. Photo: David Wallace/BBC for The New York Times

tion underground was of extreme importance. Using a combination of old documents mentioning the tomb's location (one of them a 3000 year old papyrus), modern geophysical instruments, and "good old-fashioned archeology," Weeks and his team were able to relocate the entrance of KV 5 in January of 1987.

The accessible parts of the tomb were almost completely choked with waterborne debris. An enterprising

explorer, perhaps James Burton, had cut a tunnel through this debris allowing access to a huge 16 pillared hall roughly 50 feet square. Although this chamber was also quite full of debris, it was possible for Weeks and his colleagues to confirm Burton's sketch plan and make one of their own. To the right was a smaller 6 pillared hall; to the left were two chambers—one quite small, the other seemingly quite large, but whose ceiling had completely caved in, perhaps due to vibration from the tourist buses in the nearby parking lot. Off the back of the 16 pillared hall was a corridor that seemed to be at least 30 feet long, but its extent could not be accurately determined since it was filled almost to the ceiling with silt. However, to the left of the corridor's entrance was a suite of four rooms (partially recorded by Burton) suggesting that there might be others.

During the first seasons of work, Weeks cleared sections of two small

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DEAR ARCE MEMBER

With No. 167, I'm happy to introduce our redesigned Newsletter. It incorporates a number of new features, including a column on books and educational materials, and a "Letters to the Editor" feature. I hope you will want to share with us and other ARCE members your queries and reactions to articles that appear in the Newsletter or elsewhere.

And speaking of the Editor, I am very pleased to introduce Joan Meisel as the new Newsletter Editor. Joan, who lives in New York, has long experience working on newsletters of professional associations and institutes, and in taking over the editorship of "NARCE," she gets to combine that professional background with a long-time interest in Egypt.

We also need to say a fond farewell to the outgoing editor, Monique Bell, who for three years performed miracles in producing one good issue after another, while holding down a demanding job with a New York theatrical producer. We will miss her enthusiasm and flair.

Terry Walz, Executive Director

A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF THE EXCITING 1995 ARCE ANNUAL MEETING

BY MATTHEW DOUGLAS ADAMS

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The forty-sixth annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt was held in Atlanta, Georgia, April 28-30, 1995, hosted by the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, and organized by Gay Robins and Elizabeth Hornor.

In the call for papers for this meeting, it was proposed that a major organizing theme should be women in Egyptian society, and many of the participants made significant contributions on this topic. Setting the tone, Dr. Fayza Haikal of the American University in Cairo gave the keynote address, entitled "Egyptian Women: Ancient and Modern Comparative Views." In her remarks Dr. Haikal bridged the gap too often seen between the ancient inhabitants of the Nile Valley and their modern descendants.

A range of aspects of women in ancient Egypt were explored in the papers. In biological studies, J. Harris discussed the family relationships and biological diversity seen in royal female mummies of the New Kingdom, and S. Keita the evidence from pre- and proto-historic cemeteries for the health status of female children over time and vis-a-vis males. G. Robins, in a study of a statue of an 18th Dynasty woman, Huy, discussed her place in the royal house and the important political and ritu-

al roles played by women connected to the ruling dynasty at that time. S. Smith and J. Elias presented sociological studies of women's status as seen through mortuary archaeology. Smith examined intact tombs of the 17th and 18th Dynasty from Thebes and explored the social differences between men and women represented by differences in burial equipment. Using inscriptions on Third Intermediate Period and Saite funerary equip-

ment of women from Thebes, Elias examined the way in which participation in various social groupings and association with certain institutions combined to influence the definition of the individual and her treatment at death. Several papers examined aspects of women's roles in religious belief and symbolism. D. O'Conner examined the iconographic scheme of the 6th Dynasty tomb of Pepyankh at Meir and, among other symbolically resonant representations, how the sexual relationship between Pepyankh and his wife was indicated and projected into the afterlife in the tomb's decoration. D. Silverman presented the case of a woman's magical bricks found in the tomb of her husband and its implications for understanding Egyptian funerary beliefs. V. Tobin discussed the use of feminine



Painted funerary papyrus of a man and his wife. Thebes, 19th Dynasty. Photo: Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University

symbolism in the Pyramid Texts and the conception of male/female in Old Kingdom views of the organization of creation. K. Greenberg and T. Hare presented complementary papers on the mythic symbolism and cultural construction of gender. R. Janssen's entertaining paper on the eroticism of certain female garments exposed on aspect of Egyptian thought not often discussed by scholars. As can be seen in this brief overview, the exploration of questions of women and gender is breaking new ground in Egyptology and illuminating heretofore poorly understood dimensions of life, society, and culture in ancient Egypt.

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ARCE SPONSORS BOOK PARTY AND LECTURE BY DR. BOB BRIER

ARCE sponsored a lecture about mummification given by Dr. Bob Brier on June 5th. One hundred-fifty people attended the event at the New School for Social Research in New York.

Dr. Brier's long time fascination with mummification resulted in extraordinary and controversial project to make a mummy, which was filmed as a television special for the National Geographic and covered by media around the world. Using replicas of ancient tools, including bronze and obsidian knives, natural salts and drying agents like those used by the ancient embalmers, Dr. Brier meticulously recreated the lengthy and complicated methods by which the Egyptians preserved their dead.

Following the lecture a book party was held to celebrate the publication of his new book "Egyptian Mummies" published by William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York. All who were present said it was



Dr. Bob Brier signing autographs in copies of his new book, "Egyptian Mummies."

a most enjoyable, interesting and informative evening.

ANN BEIER joins ARCE as Director of Development. She comes to us with a varied background in marketing, sales and public relations. She has worked for such diverse organizations as American Camps International, the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry and HABITAT, a UN group that aids the homeless. She will be expanding ARCE's fund raising and public relations programs.

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THE AMERICAN DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

BY TERRY WALZ

One of the most important events in ARCE's 50-year history is the opening of the exhibit "The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt." The show has been jointly organized by ARCE and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art where it is scheduled to open on November 5. ARCE members who attend the 1994 Annual Meeting in Toronto were given a preview of the exhibition by Nancy Thomas, curator of ancient art at LACMA and the exhibition's chief curator. In 1992, a two-day symposium in New York brought together a group of 12 speakers to examine the scientific contributions of the earlier generation and the specific American content to their scientific work. Their papers have served as the core essays for the exhibition's catalogue and companion scholarly volume that will appear in early 1996.

The American fascination with ancient Egypt, as the exhibition will make clear, has endured as long as the Republic itself. An early manifestation, reviewed by Bruce Trigger in an essay in the upcoming exhibition catalogue, can be seen in the dollar bill — the unfinished pyramid capped by the All-seeing Eye, which was incorporated into the Great Seal of the

TERRY WALZ IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ARCE

United States and approved by the Continental Congress in 1782. Thanks to the influence of the Freemasons and their belief that Egyptians were the progenitors of architectural arts, Egypt became linked in the American imagination with the Enlightenment ideals of liberalism and human brotherhood, and, more relevantly, with the sound construction of government. Through stereotypes in the Bible but particularly in the story of the Exodus — that other great American



Excavation of the Temple of Mentuhotep-Nebhepetre at Thebes, c. 1922. Photography by the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

cultural construct — Egypt was also associated with themes of corruption and oppression, and the excesses of Egyptomania can be traced to that cultural force. Thus the early images of Egypt in the popular imagination were both positive and negative.

Today, most Americans succumb to the magic of Egypt when visiting the Egyptian galleries of great municipal museums. Children become hooked on mummies, their parents

on the views of afterlife and both on Egyptian feats of engineering. As a matter of fact, the growth of the American museums only occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, and the profession of Egyptology, on which that growth has depended, even later.

The story of the American awakening to pharaonic Egypt will be unveiled in exciting detail in the forthcoming exhibition (which after opening in Los Angeles will travel to St. Louis and Indianapolis). The goal

of the organizers is to demonstrate the specific contribution that Americans have made to the study and comprehension of ancient Egypt, and to help the public appreciate the on-going archaeological work now being carried out in that antique land. The American contribution reflects particular intellectual tastes and trends over the years as well as a wide variety of experiences by individual Americans in Egypt over two centuries that the Valley of the Nile has been

visited.

It is clear that the "American Discovery of Ancient Egypt" has been given shape by a small number of remarkable individuals. The two greatest figures are no doubt George A. Reisner, founding father of American Egyptian archeology, and James H. Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and the first professor of Egyptology in the United States. To this group can also be added Herbert Winlock, Charles Wilbour and Sara

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NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the 1995 Annual Meeting, five new members came on to the Board of Governors. They include: Sameh Iskandar, head of a real estate development firm in New York City and a candidate for a master's degree in Egyptology at New York University; Barbara Mertz, the well-known novelist who writes under the names of Elizabeth Peters and Barbara Michaels, who received a degree in Egyptology from the University of Chicago; and Nancy Thomas, curator of ancient and Islamic art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and curator of the "American Discovery of Ancient Egypt" exhibition. New representatives from Research Supporting Members of ARCE include: Everett Rowson, professor of Arabic and Islamic studies in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania; Scott Carroll, Executive Director of the newly created Scriptorium: Center for Christian Antiquities and director of the Wadi Natrun excavations in Egypt; Irene Bierman, newly named director of the Gustave Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles; Donald McDonald, president of AUC and Jehane Ragai, professor of chemistry at the American University in Cairo.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL

Diana Craig Patch, director of the new ARCE Archaeological Field School, left for Cairo June 5, to launch the inaugural season of the newly created "ARCE Archaeological Field School." The Field School Project, which is being funded by the Egyptian Antiquities Project (which

is funded by the Agency for International Development), aims to train up to 20 Egyptian antiquities inspectors a year in American field archaeology methods. Dr. Patch is bringing with her a staff of three: Stephen Harvey, Maryann Pouls, and Carol Yokell, who with the help of three Egyptian antiquities supervisors will be in charge of training the others.

The Supreme Council of Antiquities has given the Field School a site at Mitrahina (ancient Memphis). The school is expected to



Attending the Fayza Haikal reception were (l to r) Bob Brier, Sameh Iskandar, Sylvia Iskandar, and Ted Halkedis.

last from June 15 to July 26.

Dr. Patch is being accompanied by her daughter Julia, and her husband, Dr. James Romano of The Brooklyn Museum.

"CAIRO: CITY OF ISLAM" COURSE: OFF AND FLYING

A contingent of 20 American graduate students and two course instructors, Vincent Cornell and Carl Petry (Northwestern University), flew to Cairo June 14 to participate in a two-month course on Islam. (Zaki Badawi of the Muslim College, London, will

join the staff in Cairo at the beginning of the program and Miriam Cooke of Duke University will be coming at the latter part of the program.) The course, funded through the Near and Middle East Research and Training Act (administered by the United States Information Agency), will allow students to immerse themselves in the theory, practice, history, and culture of Islam in one of the Islamic world's greatest cities. Classroom instructions will be complimented by field excursions to important cultural sites in Cairo and environs; the group will also travel to Alexandria and Tanta. Students will earn credit through Duke University's graduate school for attending the course.

"Cairo: City of Islam" was developed by Dr. Cornell, a professor in the department of religion at Duke University, who is a specialist on Islam and Islamic culture. He has previously led student groups to Morocco.

The course organizers hope that it can be repeated in 1997. More than 80 applications were received for this pilot program.

LOS ANGELES SYMPOSIUM

The Los Angeles chapter of ARCE is organizing a very exciting all-day symposium in November called "Origins of the Egyptian State." For details, see Development News.

VISIT OF FAYZA HAIKAL

Dr. Haikal, vice president of the International Association of Egyptologists and professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo, recently completed a visit to the United States as the guest of ARCE. She lectured in a

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Another season is racing toward a close, and we are racing along with it trying to catch up, finish up, and begin anew for the coming year.

We are in the midst of organizing an interesting and different program for next year including field trips we have not done in the past. This will include a day trip to the petrified forest area around Wadi Natrun led by Ibrahim Helmy, Desert Field Specialist with NAMRU and a day trip to the monasteries of the Fayoum.

Ibrahim Sadek is once again organizing the popular series on Alexandria with a weekend excursion at the end of October. Additionally, we have been approached by Cairo's American College to jointly sponsor a lectures series. The first will begin September 24 with William Lyster, entitled "An Introduction to Medieval Cairo." We will doubtless schedule more such programs to be

Our goal for the coming year is Fundraising — a difficult word for some of us who just are not in that mode, but we are struggling to learn and are making all efforts to put ARCE and the new facilities in the hearts and minds (and hopefully, the checkbooks, too) of our friends. Last June, the U.S. Ambassador sponsored a reception which was a roaring success.

FOCUS ON FELLOWS

The Fellows this year have been very interesting. Most are young, pre-dissertation students and are really "into" their work. Many are fluent in Arabic and have needed little assistance and all have plunged into their work in Egypt without fear. After a recent lecture, a group of the Fellows asked if they could have a "lunch

seminar" each week where they would present one paper followed by a discussion. The first seminar was held last week in the Director's Residence week with 12 Fellows in attendance and the scheduled hour and a half discussion extended to nearly 3 hours!

Because this group has been so full of energy and enthusiasm we asked each to write a short description of their work, or some of their activities while here. Several have responded and the following stories are submitted for your reading entertainment!



The Bab Zuwayla (1092 AD), the gates of the Southern Entrance of El-Qahira (Cairo). Standing on its top wall are the two minarets of the Mosque of Sultan Al-Mu'ayyad (1420 AD). To the left is the Mosque of Barquq and to the right, the roof of Saleh Tala'i. Photo by Patrick Godeau EAP/ARCE

JOHNATHAN E. BROCKOPP, ARCE FELLOW

Early Sunday morning, I caught the minibus to Ataba square and switched to another bus heading for al-Azhar University. Al-Azhar, the center of Muslim orthodoxy for centuries, sits proudly in the middle of the old Fatimid city. Next to the thousand-year-old mosque, many newer buildings have been erected to serve a growing student body. My interests were not in anything so recent, however, and I headed for the ancient collection of Islamic legal manuscripts, which have formed the heart of al-Azhar's traditional curriculum.

For years, I have worked with a microfilm copy of a particular manuscript from al-Azhar: *The Large Compendium of Jurisprudence* written by Abdallah b. Abd al-Hakam (d. 829 C.E.). This text, written some 200 years after the Prophet's death, is one of the first systematic legal works in Islam, yet it has never been edited or published. The manuscript in al-Azhar is particularly valuable, since it also preserves an early commentary on this text. The prospect of having the original in my hands heightened my expectations as I entered the mosque and asked for the location of the manuscript library.

Scholars are a strange lot. We happily spend months sifting through fragments from the past, trying to piece together a coherent picture of a culture long-since forgotten. A manuscript is an exciting clue to this past, since it preserves so much more than mere text. The Azhar manuscript, for instance, was previously dated to the year 1,200 C.E., since remarks in the title page state that it was donated to a legal college in Cairo on that date.

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PASSAGE TO EGYPT: THE LIFE OF LUCIE DUFF GORDON

BY KATHARINE FRANK

399 PP. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN & CO.
NEW YORK \$27.50

BY SUSAN ALLEN

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



Travel accounts, and particularly those written by women, have enjoyed renewed popularity in recent years, both with the general public and the scholarly community. Perhaps we find the accounts of real people diverting after our required reading of site reports and scholarly articles. It puts us in touch with a time that seems less complicated and allows us to recapture the romance of these first explorers and their discoveries.

As students of ancient and modern Egypt, some of us now travel a good deal abroad and spend extended periods in Egypt on excavations and fellowships. Our idea of travel, however, was probably formed by years of short family vacations to a cottage by the lake or a car trip. The idea of extended travel and of taking up residence for a period somewhere was incomprehensible. Moreover, we almost never write letters home, send only a few postcards, and have largely abandoned journals and diaries. We communicate by telephone and e-mail.

But letters and diaries (which are in a sense letters to ourselves) require us to organize our thoughts, to process impressions and sensations, to reflect on events, to sit quietly and put them down on paper and then to consider what we have written. I first read the letters of Lucie Duff Gordon

almost twenty years ago — a copy picked up at a second-hand bookshop late at night — attracted by the fact it was about Egypt. I had already lived in Luxor for three years and so had perhaps some affinity with this earlier inhabitant and a degree of local knowledge that enhanced my reading of her accounts. I knew little of her background before she came to Egypt and I doubt I cared to know. I read her for what she told me about life in Egypt at a time when it was still mysterious and seldom visited. Certainly I appreciated her for the remarkable woman that she was in living the life she describes in Egypt, as well as for her skill as a writer. I had no idea, however, that she was writing for publication or that she was well known in her own time.

Katherine Frank's admirable new biography, *Passage to Egypt: The Life of Lucie Duff Gordon*, has remedied my ignorance, and forced me to reconsider this extraordinary woman. More than half of this biography deals with her life before she arrived in Egypt in 1862. Lucie Duff Gordon led a challenging, interesting and accomplished life long before she

was forced to travel to Egypt for her health. She grew up surrounded by some of the major writers and philosophers of the first half of the 19th century: John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, Dickens, Thackeray, Meredith and Tennyson. She was well educated and encouraged to think for herself, and she had a keen awareness of the inner resources one needed to survive. Though she tested the boundaries of conventional Victorian manners, she seems to have known and accepted her place within them as a daughter, wife and mother. In the end, however, she used the two excuses allowed within Victorian society to free herself from its strictures and obligations — illness and travel to a nonwestern society.

Her six years in Egypt, where she became Noor ala Noor of Luxor, transformed her. Her literary production was no longer translations, but writing of her own — her letters, which expressed her own thoughts. She was intelligent, observant and thoughtful and therefore was never bored. The self-reliance she had learned from her mother, Sarah Austin, sustained her when she was ill or lonely. Moreover, she was accustomed to and at ease in the company of men; with her position as a foreigner and her skill in nursing, this provided an entree into Luxor society. Her unreligious upbringing freed her from the preoccupation of so many early visitors to Egypt — to find in it a reflection of the events of the Bible — and her view of Egypt was remarkably free of the prejudices of her time. From the beginning, she seems to have let go of the past and to have taken a lively interest in Egyptian life. While she was eager to share with her family her life and her

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CROSSROADS: THE NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST FILM FESTIVAL AT THE PUBLIC THEATRE

BY LIVIA ALEXANDER

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY,
ARCE MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

In front of a packed audience, the most recent opus by the famous Egyptian film director, Youssef Chahine, *The Immigrant*, marked the opening of the Middle Eastern film festival at the Public Theater. The *Immigrant* is a film inspired by the Biblical story of Joseph and his brothers. As such, it was recently at the center of a legal battle waged by religious circles to have the film banned in Egypt on the grounds that it visualizes what must not be visualized. The film was finally approved for screening by a favorable court ruling. This is the first Middle Eastern film festival to take place in New York. It featured over 20 films from 9 different countries in the Middle East and North Africa, and ran between May 5 and May 31, 1995.

As a leading force in Middle Eastern cinema, Egyptian films captured a prominent place in the film festival. *Mercedes*, directed by Yusri Nasrallah (Egypt, 1993) is a brilliant comedy of manners that spans in one sweep sexual liberation, Marxism, terrorism, homosexuality, and the passion for succor. Daoud Abdel Sayed's *Kit Kat* (Egypt, 1991) is an account of the adventures of a blind

musician in a colorful evocation of a popular neighborhood. *The Terrorist* directed by Nadar Galal (Egypt, 1994) is another film presented at the festival. Due to the pro-government overtones of the film it was received in Egypt with much suspicion. The film tells the story of a Muslim fundamentalist — played by Adel al-Imam, one of Egypt's most famous comedians—who ends up hiding from government authorities in the house of a westernized family.

Another two films directed by Youssef Chahine and presented in the film festival were *Alexandria Why?* (Egypt, 1979), the first part of Chahine's autobiographical trilogy in which he narrates his growing up in Alexandria between 1942-1945; and *Alexandria, Again and Forever* (Egypt, 1990), the third and last installment of the trilogy which examines the disintegrating rapport between a filmmaker and his favorite actor.

A symposium on Middle Eastern cinema took place on May 1, at New York University, co-sponsored by the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies and the Public Theater. Participants were Magda Wassef, director of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, Youssef Chahine, and Nabil al-Malih, a prominent Syrian filmmaker. It was moderated by M. Finkelstein of the *Village Voice*.

In her discussion, Wassef gave a brief account on the development and history of cinema in the various countries of the Middle East. She noted that the origins of cinema in

the Middle East can be traced back as early as the turn of the century. These initial stages are marked with the production of the first silent films in Egypt. Today, Egypt offers one of the most flourishing and proliferate film industries in the Arab world.

al-Malih pointed out that the supremacy and wide markets of Egyptian cinema in the Arab world has a contrary effect of inhibiting the development of film production in other Arab countries. al-Malih also touched upon the different structure of the Syrian film industry in relation to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in the West. As they are completely funded by the state, Syrian filmmakers enjoy generous budgets which allow them more freedom, but, also, subjects them directly to censorship and control by the state.

Issues of censorship and self-censorship were also a concern for Youssef Chahine. In his address, Chahine expressed his opinion that censorship is practiced in the West just as it is in the Arab world. However in the West censorship is self-imposed by the overwhelming popularity of action films, such as Sylvester Stallone's Rambo series. Such a reality leaves little space for more thoughtful cinema.

All speakers in the panel expressed their concern of the little knowledge and interest in Arab cinema by audiences in the United States and conveyed their gratitude and appreciation to Fabiano Canosa, film program director at the Public Theater, for putting together this film festival.



DOWN ON THE DIG

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

chambers leading to the large pillared hall. In these he found some exquisite, though fragmentary plaster relief scenes and inscriptions recording the names of two of the sons of Ramesses II. In June of 1994, work was begun in the back corridor of the tomb and a second suite of chambers was uncovered on the right at the beginning of the corridor. In January and February of 1995, while doing further excavations in the back corridor, Weeks and his team discovered that a section of fallen ceiling had blocked the corridor about half way down, also blocking the much of the water-borne silt that filled the rest of the tomb. The corridor extended nearly twice as far as originally thought, with a row of single chambers along each side. At the end was a figure of Osiris, god of the underworld, carved in high relief. There were also two long corridors, to right and left, each with more small chambers on either side, bringing the number of chambers in the tomb to more than 60.

Because of various architectural clues, Weeks theorizes that the small chambers lining the back corridors served as offering chapels and that there is a lower level to the tomb that may have contained the actual burials. It is known that Ramesses had at least 50 sons, and this tomb could certainly have held them all (except for Merneptah, who succeeded his father as pharaoh, and Khaemwas, who may have been buried at Memphis).

Although the tomb was thoroughly robbed in ancient times, remains of funerary equipment indicate that the tomb was used for burials, and suggest that there is a lot of information to be gained in future excavations. The newly discovered rooms also have substantial preserved decoration which, when thoroughly examined, could offer new perspectives on the time of Ramesses II. At the very least, the tomb is architecturally unique in the Valley of the Kings, and seems to be the first common family crypt ever established by an Egyptian King.

More work will be done in KV 5 during July and a longer field season is planned for the fall. 🐾

WHEN GIVING IS GETTING

This is a win-win opportunity for anyone interested in supporting ARCE and its goals. Life income gifts make it possible for more and more members to give gifts without jeopardizing their own financial security.

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In addition to significant financial gains, you will have the time-honored pleasure of giving, knowing the ARCE will be able to continue its worthwhile endeavors because of your thoughtful act.

Why not consider setting up a charitable trust naming ARCE as a beneficiary? Call Ann Beier at (212) 529-6661 for further information.

ARCE NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

A rich complement to these papers was provided by the outstanding exhibit at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, "Reflections of Women in the New Kingdom: Ancient Egyptian Art from the British Museum," organized by Gay Robins. The exhibit was composed of items from the vast collection of the British Museum and included some famous pieces, such as the beautiful funerary papyri of Anhay and Herihor's mother Nedjmet. Organized along a number of themes, the exhibit reflected the multi-dimensional nature of female roles in Egyptian society and culture: (i) the ideal female image; (ii) women portrayed on men's monuments; (iii) women as owners of monuments, contrasting with (iv) monuments owned only by men; (v) the social roles of women; (vi) royal women; (vii) pregnancy, birth, and the family; (viii) household deities Tawaret and Bes; (ix) Hathor as the goddess of sexuality and fertility; (x) female sexuality; and (xi) women and death.

In addition to those sessions devoted to the theme of women, others presented the results of exciting new research on various aspects of dynastic Egypt as well as orientalist views of Egypt, Egypt and the Old Testament, Egypt in the Graeco-Roman and Islamic periods, and modern Egyptian politics and history. As with all ARCE meetings, this was also an opportunity to "catch up" with colleagues and friends, which, combined with the quality of the paper, the fine exhibit, and the pleasant Atlanta setting combined to make the 1995 meeting memorable for one and all. 🐾

For copies and abstracts of the ARCE program, send \$5.00 to ARCE, 30 East 20th St. New York, NY 10003

NEWS FROM NEW YORK

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number of cities where there are ARCE chapters, and provided the keynote lecture at the Annual Meeting in Atlanta.

Dr. Heikal spoke on two subjects—a comparative view of women in Egypt from ancient to modern times, and the progress of the archaeological salvage program in the northern Sinai, being carried out by members of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities.

NEW HISTORY FELLOWSHIP

Katherine (Kay) Pfeiffer, with a doctorate from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, has just been awarded a three-month fellowship to carry out research on a history of the American Research Center in Egypt. The fellowship is being funded by the United States Information Agency. Ms. Pfeiffer's dissertation focused on the Center of International Education at the University of Massachusetts, and thus she comes to this project with professional experience in writing institutional history.

Ms. Pfeiffer will be spending two months carrying out research in the ARCE archives at the Smithsonian Institution and in New York and a month or so in Cairo. She plans to talk with as many older members of the organization as she can. Any ARCE members with knowledge of the earlier history of ARCE are asked to get in touch with her via the New York office. She is anxious to collect anecdotes and other personal stories that contribute to our understanding of the organization as a whole and the contribution it has made to the profession and to an understanding of Egypt. 🐾

THE MONTH THAT WAS: MAY 1995

New York City has witnessed these past few weeks an unusually active season of cultural activities featuring Egyptian and Arab personalities, prominent academics, world renowned movie directors, and dance choreographers.

Had some organization devoted to changing the all too often maligned image of the Arab Middle East and North Africa, tried to put together a well orchestrated P.R. blitz, they would not have succeeded in putting together this impressive coterie of people. They countered the extremely detrimental media campaigns against Arabs especially during and after the tragic Oklahoma bombing, when the media rushed to accuse and indict Middle Easterners without checking their facts.

To the credit of some well-established t.v. anchor hosts, some effort was made to denounce such wanton, undocumented coverage. Thus, Sam Donaldson, for instance (controversial in any case), pointed to this on his Sunday morning roundtable with David Brinkley. Ted Koppel in one of his "Night Line" shows interviewed some members of the earliest Arabs who settled in communities in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, showing that Arabs are really average people whom one may not object to having as next door neighbors. For once they were not threatening terrorists, or mysteriously veiled women or, for that matter, garish multi-millionaires.

By coincidence, and definitely not by design, New York hosted an array of some impressive talent enough to make any society shamelessly proud.

The same week Mahmoud Reda the founder of Egypt's renowned Folklore Dance School and Reda Troupe, which has toured the globe for the last forty years, was being honored by Middle Eastern Dance groups from around New York at the well-known Egyptian Restaurant "Cleopatra" in Manhattan.

Yousef Chahine and his devoted disciple, Yousry Nasrallah, presented their award winning artistic productions as part of a Middle Eastern film festival see Film Review, p. 9).

Along with his classic "Trilogy" on Alexandria, Chahine showed his controversial "Emigrant" based on the Biblical/Qur'anic story of Sayyidna Youssef (story of Joseph). The court ordered ban on it was lifted in the Spring, and freedom of expression prevailed.

Nasrallah was here to present his brilliant "Mercedes," a saga that mixes politics, sex, gay rights, corruption and love, a first for Arab cinema.

In early June, the Egyptian American Professional Society organized a special fundraising event to award the famous Farouk al-Baz, a life Achievement Award for his contributions to lunar sciences in this country and his scientific research. His work will help Egypt reclaim desert land, thus alleviating its endemic population and unemployment problems.

So it was, social scientists, humanists, artists, Egyptians were prominently featured. They came to share their talent, and their contributions were enthusiastically received.

Mona N. Mikhail
New York University

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORKSHOP IN ARCHAEOLOGY for elementary and secondary school teachers. Topics include: incorporating archaeology into interdisciplinary public school curricula; use of locally available resources and materials on history and prehistory. Co-sponsored by Archaeological Institute of America, Westchester Chapter and Teacher Education Dept., Manhattanville College, Purchase, N.Y. Contact Peter Feinman (914)939-9071. Sat., Oct. 21, 1995, Manhattanville College. Purchase N.Y.

THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM announces the Veronika Gervers Research Fellowship in Textile and Costume History of up to \$9000 CAN to be awarded to a scholar working on any aspect of textile or costume history whose research makes direct use of, or supports, any part of the ROM collections that cover a broad range of time and geography. For information, contact Chair, Veronika Gervers Memorial Fellowship, Textile Dept. Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ont. Canada M5S2C6; (416) 586-5790. Application deadline: Nov. 15, 1995.

FACULTY POSITION

Assistant Professor of Egyptology in the Oriental Institute and the Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Appointment begins July 1, 1996. Applicants must have a sound philological background in all aspects of Egyptology with special interest in the first 3 millennia of Egyptian history and active research in, e.g., Egyptian literature, religion, or social and economic history. Applications, which should include a *Curriculum Vitae* and three or more academic references, and should be submitted to: Egyptology Search Committee, Oriental Institute, 1155 E. 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637. Application deadline: Dec. 15, 1995.

EXHIBITION PREVIEW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

Yorke Stevenson.

REISNER AND THE FOUNDATION OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHOD

George Andrew Reisner (1867-1942) was born in Indianapolis and received a doctorate in Semitic language and literature from Harvard University in 1893. He went on to study Egyptology and Berlin under Adolf Erman, then the great grammarian of ancient Egyptian. He is best known for his work at Giza and on the Nubian monuments in the Sudan, and the artifacts that he excavated at sites in Egypt and the Sudan are important components in the "American Discovery of Ancient Egypt."

Reisner excavated at the Giza Plateau from 1902 to the late 1930's. In addition to clearing the tombs of royal family members and high state officials, he also cleared the princely mastabas (tombs) of the sons and daughters of Khufu, the queen's pyramids and temples associated with Menkaure. They are among the great treasures in the Egyptian collection of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In the course of decades of work in the Nile Valley, Reisner refined his system of conscientious fieldwork. Basic to his technique was thorough recording of finds, attention to site stratigraphy, the production of sophisticated multilevel plans, and extensive field photography. He was the first archaeologist to successfully use photographic documentation as a standard component of fieldwork.

While Reisner worked closely with his Egyptian workmen, who served as assistant draftsmen, publication secretaries, and photographers — and in this he was most unusual amongst foreign archaeologists — he also trained several generations of

American Egyptologists during his long reign on the Giza Plateau. His Aswan granite tombstone reads: "Erected in memory of George Andrew Reisner by his family by the Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in honor to the archaeologists and by his Egyptian workmen in memory of their mudir and friend."

BREASTED AND THE CONSERVATION OF TEXTS

James Henry Breasted (1865-1935) was born two years earlier than Reisner in Rockford Illinois, and while training for the ministry in Chicago, he discovered an aptitude for Semitic languages, which he pursued at Yale and in Berlin, also under Professor Erman. He was appointed to the first American teaching position in Egyptology, which was created in 1894, at the "disappointing" annual salary of \$800 (inaugurating a tradition of low salaries in the field). He spent his honeymoon in Egypt recording texts, sometimes, at Karnak, by moonlight. Unlike Charles Wilbour (see below), who published texts that had not yet been recorded, Breasted was anxious to preserve what was already visible and therefore perishable. "Excavation seemed to him eminently worthwhile," . . . wrote his son Charles Breasted in the well-known biography of his father, "but of secondary importance. . . Egypt's buried antiquities were reasonably safe and could wait. But the inscribed records on her ancient monuments were exposed to weathering and vandalism, and even since the days of . . . Napoleon and Lepsius, had very perceptibly suffered." This concern ultimately led to the establishment of the Epigraphic Survey, under the auspices of the Oriental Institute, which Breasted founded at the University of Chicago in 1919. The exhibition draws heavily on the archaeological and epigraphy work undertaken by the University of Chicago, and thus Breasted's legacy

endures.

Breasted worked steadily and fruitfully, becoming one of the best known figures in American Egyptology among the American public. He went on extensive lecture tours throughout the United States, explaining the latest discoveries and popularizing the study of Egypt.

Breasted is best remembered as a scholar primarily of interpretive works, such as *The History of Egypt* (New York, 1905), now largely out of date but according to some contemporary Egyptologists the best general history of Egypt ever written. His finest work was the publication, transcription, translation, and commentary he provided of the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus, a medical text that had been purchased in Luxor in 1862 by Edwin Smith, an American scholar of Egyptian language, and presented to the New York Historical Society upon Smith's death in 1906.

Breasted dedicated his life to the preservation of texts, but he was also very keen to demonstrate the context of the texts, which is a general theme in American epigraphic work. He wrote, "It is the life of ancient men which I am trying to recover and to picture to the men of today, because I believe it will enrich our lives."

CHARLES WILBOUR AND THE COLLECTION OF EGYPTIAN ART

Charles Edwin Wilbour was born in Rhode Island, became a New York journalist and an Egyptologist, having studied some years in Paris and Heidelberg. In 1880 he made the first of his annual trips to Egypt (which continued until 1896), traveling up and down the Nile in his famous dahabiya, the "Seven Hathors." It was equipped with a full larder and as complete an Egyptological library as could be had in those days. According to James Allen, a curator of Egyptian art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he was the first American epigrapher of the ancient

British-based Egyptian language, "driven by the need to record the ancient texts as he saw even then disappearing year by year."

Wilbour happily copied on and on often into the night while his companions on the "Seven Hathors" whiled away their time playing chess in the dahabiya's salon. He recorded his observations in a notebook in Pitman, the early form of shorthand.

Wilbour enjoyed excavations and making reports of what he saw, but he was also a collector of very fine antiquities. As a collector, he was often interested in the bizarre, such as a falcon-headed crocodile that will be on exhibit during the "American Discovery of Ancient Egypt," but also the remarkable portrait of Akhenaten and Nefertiti now known as "The Wilbour Plaque," one of the treasures of The Brooklyn Museum. His remarkable collection of antiquities later formed the basis for the Egyptian collection at The Brooklyn Museum, and the library of his "Seven Hathors" later formed the core of what became the Charles Edwin Wilbour Memorial Library at The Brooklyn Museum, perhaps the finest Egyptological library in the country.

SARA YORKE STEVENSON AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENTS OF EGYPTIAN ART

Sara Yorke Stevenson (1847-1921) was born of American parents in Paris and in 1868 settled in Philadelphia. An interest in Mediterranean and Egyptian antiquities led her to become, in 1890, the first curator of the new section of that name three years after what eventually became the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

At that time it was unusual for museums to participate in excavations in Egypt. Mrs. Stevenson soon formed a close relationship with the British-based Egypt Exploration Fund, founded in 1882 with the pur-

pose of excavating Egyptian sites and obtaining artifacts for supporting institutions. For a number of years it was a primary source of artifacts for newly founded municipal museums of art. As a major contributor to the Fund between 1890 and 1907 and to a lesser degree from 1913 to 1915 and also 1924, the University Museum received objects from the important archaeological sites in Egypt, including the royal cemeteries at Abydos, one of the premier and earliest sites associated with dynastic Egypt.

As curator, Sara Stevenson worked hard to lay the groundwork for the Museum's excavations in Egypt. Her shrewd cultivation of Flinders Petrie, the founding father of Egyptian archaeology and the primary excavator for the fund, permitted her to amass a superb collection of antiquities from all periods for the Museum, which was her ultimate aim. He was notoriously temperamental, but Mrs. Stevenson handled him beautifully. She praised him as the "father of the museum's Egyptian department;" she carefully noted in her letters to him the scholarly significance of his finds; witticisms, which Petrie enormously enjoyed; but most importantly, she habitually sent larger funds than solicited, and thus put the Museum in a highly favorable light. The result was that the Museum was often offered first option to purchase first rate finds; thus, Mrs. Stevenson succeeded in building up the Museum's collection of first-rate, scientifically excavated material from most periods of Egyptian history.

These remarkable individuals set the standards for the high quality of American interest in Egypt and the antiquities from that country that the ordinary public enjoys and is inspired by. The exhibition fully demonstrates the continuing contribution that American institutions are making in furthering an understanding of ancient Egypt. ▀

lishment. Coming to Howard as part of a tentative Egyptological experiment, I was amazed at the quantity of Egyptology that was already being taught, in courses ranging from drama to mathematics to philosophy. (An Afrocentric work by Ivan van Sertima on Egypt is included in the recommended reading for freshman orientation.) The movement continues to grow in importance and influence, and, whatever one thinks of its content, it has an increasing degree of popular acceptance by a large audience.

This kind of Egyptology has little to do with the Egyptology that we professional Egyptologists practice, and many of us currently regard its incursions upon our field as a nuisance. We see it only when its exponents ask aggressive and seemingly irrelevant questions in classes and public lectures, or make extravagant claims about ancient Egyptian achievements (the harnessing of electricity, the conquest of large parts of southern Europe), citing authors of dubious credibility and outdated theories and translations (often by E. A. W. Budge). Especially annoying are those who combine Afrocentrism with the age-old mystical-crackpot approach to our field, claiming for the Egyptians fantastic lost skills and secret knowledge. In most cases, our reaction to Afrocentrism is avoidance: we deal with the issue by dismissing it as nonsense, by disparaging the knowledge of its proponents, and by getting back to "real" Egyptology.

By doing this, however, we are both ignoring a danger and missing an opportunity. The number of African-Americans who are taught this material is growing, and we will increasingly have to deal with its inaccuracies and exaggerations simply in order to teach our students. This gap between our field and the Afrocentric version of it is

not going to go away; if we ignore it, it will surely widen. And by setting ourselves against the whole phenomenon in an adversarial and often condescending way, we make it impossible for the responsible educators involved in the movement (and there are many) to tap our expertise and improve the accuracy of the materials they teach.

At the moment, however, we have the opportunity to narrow the gap by taking a more positive direction. By granting that an Afrocentric perspective may have something to offer our field, we can exorcise the defensiveness and hostility that is so often engendered by the assertions of Afrocentrists. By making our classes more hospitable to those with Afrocentric views, we take the first steps towards training a new generation of Afrocentric scholars in the traditional methods of our field. They will then be able to correct and improve the argumentation of Afrocentric scholarship so that the content of their movement benefits from traditional Egyptology's decades of research and hard-won conclusions. Afrocentric Egyptology need not necessarily conflict with traditional Egyptology; it seems to me possible to combine the two, to the benefit, perhaps, of both.

First, however, it is necessary for traditional Egyptologists to understand the underpinnings of Afrocentric Egyptology. Its contentions, as I have encountered them, fall under four rough rubrics: (1) that the ancient Egyptians were black, (2) that ancient Egypt was superior to other ancient civilizations (especially that of the ancient Greeks, which is seen to be largely derivative), (3) that Egyptian culture had tremendous influence on the later cultures of Africa and Europe, and (4) that there has been a vast racist conspiracy to prevent the dissemination of the evidence for these assertions. Most traditional Egyptologists recognize these contentions, but do not understand the motives behind them,

and so deal with them in a counter-productive way. I will address them one by one.

1. THE CONTENTION THAT THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS WERE BLACK. Like most of us, it had never occurred to me that the ancient Egyptians were any color in particular. Neither black nor white seemed an appropriate category—they were simply Egyptian. This view, in fact, is probably the one held by most Egyptians themselves, both ancient and modern. As we know from their observant depictions of foreigners, the ancient Egyptians saw themselves as darker than Asiatics and Libyans, and lighter than the Nubians, and with different facial features and body types than any of these groups. They considered themselves, to quote Goldilocks, "just right." These indigenous categories are the only ones that can be used to talk about race in ancient Egypt without anachronism. Even these distinctions may have represented ethnicity as much as race: once an immigrant began to wear Egyptian dress, he or she was generally represented as Egyptian in color and features. Although there are occasional indications of unusually curly hair, I know of no examples of people with exaggeratedly un-Egyptian facial features, such as those represented in battle and tribute scenes, who are represented wearing Egyptian dress, though such people must have existed.

As for indigenous categories in modern Egypt, I have been told by most of the modern Egyptians with whom I've discussed the question that, if they had to use the categories of the modern Western world, they would describe themselves as white. (There are some exceptions, but few would describe themselves as black.) As evidence of this, one can point to the consternation that was produced in Egypt when it was announced that the black actor Lou Gosset would portray President Anwar Sadat in a biographi-

cal film. There exist terms in modern colloquial Egyptian Arabic to describe skin color, most commonly "white," "wheat-colored," "brown," and "black." In practice, however, these terms are frequently applied inaccurately, so that people are (flatteringly) described as lighter in color than they actually are. The term "black" is viewed almost as a pejorative, and is rarely used. This categorization of the modern population is only partly relevant to the question, although it contributes to the reluctance of Egyptologists working in Egypt to describe the ancient Egyptians as "black."

I have encountered arguments that the ancient Egyptians were much "black" than their modern counterparts, owing to the influx of Arabs at the time of the conquest, Caucasian slaves under the Mamlukes, or Turks and French soldiers during the Ottoman period. However, given the size of the Egyptian population against these comparatively minor waves of northern immigrants, as well as the fact that there was continuous immigration and occasional forced deportation of both northern and southern populations into Egypt throughout the pharaonic period, I doubt that the modern population is significantly darker or lighter, or more or less "African" than their ancient counterparts. It should be noted, however, that we really do not know the answer to this question. More research on human remains needs to be, and is being, done.

But what of scientific racial categories? The three races we learned about in grade school? In talking to several physical anthropologists, I have learned that these three races have no clear scientific meaning. Anthropologists today deal with populations rather than individuals, and describe ranges of characteristics that occur within a population as being similar to or different from the ranges of characteristics of another population, usually expressing the degree of affinity with a

THERE IS NO GENE FOR BLACKNESS OR WHITENESS AND NOTHING CAN ALLOW A SCIENTIST TO ASSIGN A HUMAN BEING TO ONE OR THE OTHER CATEGORY

percentage. There is no gene for blackness or whiteness, and nothing that can allow a scientist to assign a human being to one or the other category, beyond the social definitions of the culture in which the scientist is a participant. While anthropologists sometimes describe people in terms of the traditional three races, this is not a result of applying objective criteria based on clear biological distinctions, but is instead a shorthand convenience. Such judgments work backwards from the social categories to arrive at an identification that would be recognized by a member of society. For example, when a forensic anthropologist gives the race of an unidentified dead body as "white," it is simply a prediction that the "missing person" form with which it will be compared probably described the person that way. Scientific determinations are thus just as dependent upon social categories as more impressionistic judgments are.

Even comparative studies can be biased by the assumptions that underlie them. Some "Eurocentric" criteria for race acknowledge the wide variety of physical characteristics found in Europe, and define as "black" only those populations that differ markedly from all European populations. As a result, populations that resemble any European population are excluded from the category "black." This is often what happens when scientists are asked about the remains of ancient Egyptians, some of whom closely resembled southern Europeans. By this model, only Africans living south of the

Sahara desert, which separates them more markedly from European gene pools, are defined as "black." The categorizations arrived at by reversing the same procedure are equally extreme. If the range of physical types found in the African population is recognized, and the designation "white" is restricted to those populations that have none of the characteristics that are found in any African populations, many southern Europeans and much of the population of the Middle East can be characterized as "black." This method was at one time adopted by "white" American schools and clubs, which compared applicants to the "white" physical types of Northern Europe, and found that many people of Jewish or Mediterranean heritage did not measure up. Neither of these ways of determining "race" can result in a definitive division between "black" and "white," because those are not in fact distinct categories but a matter of social judgment and perspective. What is a continuum in nature is split into two groups by our society. (The terms "African" and "European," although easier to distinguish because of their geographic basis, are no less subjective and problematic as cultural categories.)

Race, then, is essentially a social concept, native to the society in which one lives. It is anachronistic to argue that the ancient Egyptians belonged to one race or another based on our own contemporary social categories, and it is equally unjustifiable to apply the social categories of modern Egypt or of ancient Greece or any other society, although all of these questions are interesting and worthy of study on their own. The results tell us nothing about Egyptian society, culture and history, which is after all, what we are interested in.

This is not, however, what the Afrocentrist Egyptologists are interested in. They want to show that according to modern Western categories, the ancient Egyptians would have been

regarded as black. This approach is not invalidated by the cultural limitations of racial designations just outlined, because it is an attempt to combat a distinct modern, Western tradition of racist argument, a tradition which has the effect of limiting the aspirations of young African-Americans and deprecating the achievements of their ancestors. This argument contends that black peoples (that is, peoples that we would describe as black) have never achieved, on their own, a satisfactory civilization, and by extension can never achieve anything of much value. "Look at Africa today," argue the adherents of this notion, ignoring the added burdens imposed by economic exploitation, cultural imperialism, and a colonial past on most African nations, and ignoring the African states which do not appear regularly in the newspapers. "Look at history," they add, discounting Egypt as part of the Near East and ignoring (generally through ignorance) the other great African cultures.

These misconceptions are argued in many parts of American society. President Richard Nixon was quoted as making several of these arguments in the recently released diaries of his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman. Similar assertions were made occasionally in the more intemperate discussions of the Los Angeles riots. And I understand that the Pennsylvania chapters of the "Klu Klux Klan" give each new member a leather-bound book with the gilded title *Great Achievements of the Black Race*, which is filled entirely with blank pages. Is it any wonder that the members of this maligned group want to inscribe on those blank pages the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx, the gold of Tutankhamun, the Asiatic conquests of Thutmose III, and the fame and political acumen of Cleopatra?

At this juncture, however, many Egyptologists miss the point. "Why not use Nubia?" I have been asked, "or any of the other great African civilizations? Why can't they leave Egypt alone?" The

answer is that these other civilizations did not build pyramids and temples that impressed the classical writers of Greece and Rome with their power, antiquity, and wisdom. Nor have most modern Americans and Europeans heard of the civilizations of Nubia, Axum, Mali, Ife, Benin, and Zimbabwe. Hannibal is famous enough to be worth claiming, but few other non-Egyptians are. The desire to be associated with historical people who are generally acknowledged to be "great" by the Western cultural canon accounts for

THE RESULTS TELL US NOTHING
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the frequent and (to Egyptologists) puzzling contention that Cleopatra was black, despite the fact that she was demonstrably descended from a family of Macedonian generals and kings who married their sisters, and therefore had little claim to either a black or an African origin (although one of my Classicist colleagues at Howard tells me that her paternal grandmother is unknown, and might have been Egyptian). The reason she is identified as black is that, among modern Americans, she is probably the best known ancient Egyptian of them all. Shakespeare and Shaw wrote plays about her, her life has been chronicled in several popular films, and her name is regularly invoked in our popular culture to signal the exotic, the luxurious, and the sexy. In this sense, "Afrocentric" Egyptology is profoundly Eurocentric, and necessarily so: it plays to the prevalent cultural background of its intended audience.

If the question of the race of the ancient Egyptians is entirely subjective

and political, then, why does it bother Egyptologists at all? Why would we rather the Afrocentrists "used Nubia"? I think our reasons are largely related to the tenuous place our field holds in academia. Afrocentrists see Egyptologists as a strong, academically supported, establishment force; but despite, and perhaps even partly because of, the popular fascination with its contents, Egyptology tends not to be taken quite seriously by people who study other parts of the ancient world. Already many noted departments of Near Eastern Studies with extensive faculty in ancient Mesopotamia and the Levant do not feel it necessary to teach or support research in Egyptology at a similar level. We fear, perhaps, that if we endorse the view that ancient Egypt was a "black civilization," we will further cut ourselves off from our colleagues who study other civilizations contemporary with ancient Egypt. At the same time, there is no place for us in African studies departments, which generally tend to address questions related to modern history and current political and social problems. While anthropologists working in Africa may offer us insights and models, the methods and concerns of our field require more, rather than less, contact with scholars studying other ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures. We have been too isolated for too long as it is.

The politics of the situation, as well as the requirements of course topics such as archaeology, make it important for us to deal with the question of the race of the ancient Egyptians in our university classes. My own method, developed long before coming to Howard, is to be very explicit about my own views on the question. I give a lecture on the land and the people of Egypt, normally very early in the semester, before the question is brought up by students, and I try to present the question neutrally, without

defensiveness or antagonism. I explain the social nature of racial categories, and the categories used by the Egyptians themselves, their representation of foreigners, and the frequency of foreign (Asian and African) immigration to Egypt in all periods of its history, extending back into the Paleolithic. Discussions of geography and language are also useful here. It is also necessary to address the political question. In doing so, I often make use of Bruce Williams' observation (which really goes to the heart of the matter) that few Egyptians, ancient or modern, would have been able to get a meal at a white lunch counter in the American South during the 1950s. Some ancient Egyptians undoubtedly looked very much like some modern African-Americans, and for similar historical reasons. Very few, if any, of them looked like me. I also explain the politics of the question in modern Egypt. Finally, I explain the irrelevance of the political question to the subject I will be teaching, a circumstance that allows me to respect the students' political convictions (which I treat rather as I might treat a religious conviction), and should allow them to learn about Egyptian culture in my class without violating their beliefs. By making my position clear at the outset, I forestall the Afrocentric students' speculations and attempts to "trap" me into committing myself to the exaggeratedly "Eurocentric" views that they might otherwise assume I espouse. It also reassures students that they can come to me with questions about their Afrocentric readings, or their own Afrocentric questions about course materials; the topic is no longer taboo. It is impossible to build bridges if we discourage discussion.

ARTICLE TO BE CONTINUED
IN NEXT NEWSLETTER



NEWS FROM CAIRO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

But I have found notes in the margins from 1,000 C.E. meaning that it was written within a generation of the death of the commentator. Therefore, this manuscript shows how a book written in ninth-century Cairo could become the fundamental text for a legal school in tenth-century Baghdad and still be actively used in Cairo 200 years later.

All this I had learned from my microfilm of the manuscript, and I eagerly anticipated the chance to uncover more secrets from the quality of paper, ink and binding. "All the manuscripts were moved to the new library," I was told. After a half-hour of searching, I found myself in a dust-filled office, surrounded by blueprints of a building so new that it was still being built! Obviously, nothing had been unpacked, so I was disappointed, but not surprised, when the director informed me that I should come back in a month.

One learns to take such set-backs in stride here. My strategy has been to never leave the house with only one research goal in mind; rather, I always have several projects at various stages of completion. This has served me well when institutes have been closed or microfilms can not be found. The Egyptians have an enormous capacity for patience, a trait the researcher must also assume, if he or she hopes to survive.

The rest of that Sunday morning, I spent looking for books to buy, attending a marriage contract ceremony, and researching another project at the American University library. The Azhar manuscript will wait for another day (if God so will). In the meantime, I content myself with the fact that I have made many unexpected discoveries in Cairo. While successful research demands

careful preparation, it also requires a willingness to pursue unforeseen objectives, and, occasionally, to leave original goals aside.

CLARISSA LEE POLLARD, ARCE FELLOW

I discovered, the first time that I TA'ed Middle Eastern History at UC Berkeley, that I had not been the only undergraduate who, upon first contact with the region's history, had trouble remembering and spelling names. I remember being astonished after our first mid-term when almost each of my fifty students came up with a different spelling of the name Mu'awiya, the first Umayyad Caliph. After much ranting, raving and cajoling (Xerxes, rendered Xerox, I told them that they would make no Western Civ instructor happy!!!!) I expected them all to get it right on the second mid-term. When their creativity in spelling Mu'awiya's name only increased, I settled for contenting myself with the fact that they knew who he was. A rose by any other name. . . right?

I got my karmic comeuppance this year in Cairo when I received my research permit from the Egyptian National Archives to begin researching my dissertation in the role of the home and the family in the shaping of Egyptian national identity (1869-1919). While I am used to a few "creative" renderings of my last name in Arabic (Bu-laard being the most common), I was entirely unprepared for the name that showed up on my permit: Klaziis Bloodar. Once I stopped laughing, I tried to clear up the misunderstanding by showing the various bureaucrats on my duty passport, ARCE ID and other forms of identification that might help clarify my "real name." They all shook their heads and said "Sorry, but as far as the government is concerned, you ARE "Klaziis Bloodar."

As the weeks passed, I got used to my new alter-ego, and seldom forgot

to register and request archives under her name. One morning (the first of Ramadan), I arrived late and hastily registered under my previous "real" name. No sooner had I started up the stairs to the reading room, than I was escorted back to the registration table only to be told that I was NOT Clarissa Lee Pollard, and that any further attempts to impersonate her would carry serious consequences. After a good full hour of heated arguments, I asked them if it was not better for me to register as Suzanne Mubarak, someone I'm really not!!

For whatever reasons, the absurdity of that question caused them to change my "real name" back from Klaziis to Clarissa and from Bloodar to Pollard. I am, however, still called Suzanne by most of the guards. What's in a name, anyway?

EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES PROJECT REPORT

BY ROBERT "CHIP" VINCENT

During the Spring, in continuing collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, we have been busy with on-going projects, and the processing and award of new ones. Additionally, we have been moving forward with the long approval process for funding of other submitted proposals under the next Cycle, number Two.

At the Zawiya Farag Ibn Barquq Mosque project, John Griswold, a stone conservator from Griswold-Wharton Associates, traveled to Cairo to conduct tests, studies and analyses for recommendations and specifications for the stone conservation. During his careful study, he discovered that a band of red layer hid an

original layer of the samples he took. Another conservator, Dr. Ian Hodgkinson of Queen's College, Ontario, has made two trips to study the wood, particularly the ceilings in the prayer hall and the sabil room. He was impressed by the complicated wood joinery and the single layer of original paint. He is also preparing a report and specifications so we can obtain bids for physical conservation of the monument.

Both he and John Griswold were assisted by Alaa El-Habashi, the EAP Technical Adjunct

Research Intern and Wadea Botros, a conservator at the Coptic Museum. The excellent publication in German by Dr. Saleh Lamei on the monument has been translated. It provides a very thorough historical documentation of the Zawiya.

The two adjacent monuments in our area of conservation projects, the Bab Zuwayla and the Mosque of Saleh Tala'i, have been documented historically and photographically. Other measures will occur in the future.

The ARCE Field School Director, Diana C. Patch spent two weeks in Cairo during which she chose a site at Memphis, interviewed and selected eighteen SCA inspectors as participants and located a dig house. She has since hired the US supervisors, purchased equipment and will start the season on June 17 for a six week period. She has now returned to Cairo to initiate the first Field School season.

We are currently exploring measures with the Director of the National Library, the Dar Al-Kutub, on how to best proceed with the facsimile publication and distribution of some of its manuscripts.

An Evaluation Committee conducted an extensive review of the proposals for a feasibility study for flood protection for the Valley of the Kings. The agreement is being finalized with the entity selected.

Chicago House will begin next Fall its conservation project, which is removing the salts and consolidating the sandstone blocks from Luxor Temple. They have been able to engage the conservator who first analyzed the blocks and he will return in the Fall to recommend how to initiate and implement the conservation strategy.

In March in Luxor, Chip Vincent had the opportunity to brief the USAID Administrator from Washington, Brian Atwood, the US Ambassador for Egypt, Edward Walker, and the USAID Mission Director for Cairo, John Westly on aspects of the EAP and guide them around Karnak Temple.

A subagreement has been signed with the Friends of the Fulbright

Commission to send eight SCA employees to the USA for a course in museum management for each of the summers of 1995 and 1996. It will be conducted by the American Association for Museum (AAM) for three weeks with a further three week practicum at a host institution. The selection process has started and finalists departed on July 13, 1995.

Proposals have been received from selected ground water specialists who will help us with specific solutions for monuments in historic and Roman Cairo.

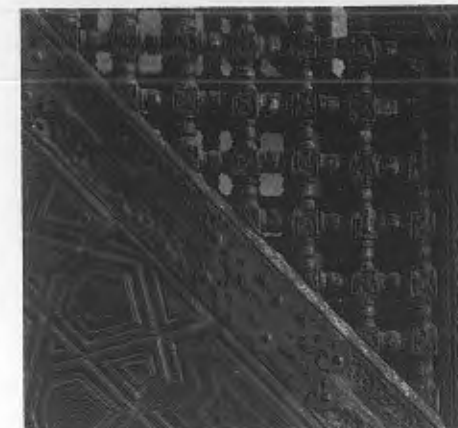
The many proposals being reviewed under our request for proposals for conservation projects have been evaluated by the ARCE



The Mosque of Saleh Tala'i, the last Fatmud Mosque built (1160) and the only one outside the fortified city of Cairo. Photo: Patrick Godeau EAP/ARCE

Oversight Committee and the successful ones are under review by the SCA.)

Mark Easton, Chip Vincent and William Remsen traveled to Atlanta for the ARCE annual meeting, expertly and cordially hosted by the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University. They met with various committees and boards and Chip Vincent gave a presentation on the EAP at the general meeting. At the presentation, I announced that a new project was open for bid. In North Sinai, where the El-Salaam (Peace) Canal is being dug to irrigate the desert for an anticipated 5,000,000 new inhabitants, the SCA is conducting a rescue effort on the many



Detail of the exquisite minbar from the Mosque of Saleh Tala'i. Given by Amir Bakhtimur in 1300, it is the fourth oldest minbar in Egypt. Photo: Patrick Godeau EAP/ARCE

threatened sites. The EAP is asking a team of primarily recording specialists (surveyors, architects, photographers, ceramics analysts, illustrators and documents managers) to join with the SCA and assist them in their effort. Proposals were due in July 27, 1995.

On May 8, Chip Vincent conducted a site visit to the Bab Zuwayla area with David Hales, Deputy Assistant Administrator for USAID in Washington.

On May 23, Chip Vincent and Bill Remsen gave a presentation to the USAID mission on the project activities.

On June 4, Mark Easton and Chip Vincent showed Ambassador and Mrs. Walker and Minister-Counselor Majorie Ramson the EAP area conservation work in historic Cairo.

Bill Remsen presented a paper on ethics in conservation on June 8th at the American Institute of Conservation annual meeting in St. Paul. He also announced that an RFP will be forthcoming for providing specifications for equipment for conservation facilities.

We are pleased with implementation of the training programs for SCA personnel and are looking forward to actual conservation intervention measures in the monuments. ♀

BOOK REVIEW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

experiences, she saw the gulf between herself and them widening, and knew that her path was inevitably a short one.

Katherine Frank has brought more to this biography than a carefully researched account of the facts of Lucie Duff Gordon's life and an attempt to understand her motivations. While all biographers must identify with their subjects and put themselves into their lives, the writing of this biography took a strange twist early on, with the death of the author's husband while visiting Cairo in an attempt to find Lucie Duff Gordon's grave. She chose to use this book to deal with her own loss, and she employs a metaphor from ancient Egyptian mythology — the story of Isis collecting the dismembered body of her murdered husband Osiris to reassemble it. Frank describes her search for the life of Lucie Duff Gordon as a "re-memering." It is a successful one and should serve as a necessary prelude to reading or rereading Lucie Duff Gordon's own *Letters from Egypt, 1862-1869*. ♀



Mirror handle in the form of a nude girl. Wood, Egypt, 18th Dynasty. Photo: Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University



Visiting the Zawiya Farag Ibn Barquq restoration project are: Front row, second from left, US Ambassador Edward Walker, Public Affairs Officer Marjorie Ramson, far right, Chip Vincent, EAP Project Dir. and tour leader. Back row; Mark Easton, Cairo Dir., next to Wadea Botros, emeritus Conservator-in-Residence Fellow. Photo: Ian Hodgkinson (ARCE/EAP)



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H O L D T H E D A T E

BOSTON

FACING ETERNITY:

MUMMY MASKS FROM ANCIENT EGYPT

Sarcophagus masks from the museum's collections.
Ongoing. The Museum of Fine Arts. (617) 267-9300

CAMBRIDGE, MA

THE PYRAMID AND THE SPHINX:

100 YEARS OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT GIZA

George Reisner's Giza finds; Mark Lehner's recent digs.
Through 1995. The Semitic Museum, Harvard
University (617) 495-4631

CHICAGO

THE GALLERIES OF ANCIENT ART

Over 350 items not seen in the museum for fifty years,
including a fragment from the tomb of Amenemhat.
The Art Institute of Chicago (312) 443-3600

CLEVELAND

SONS OF RA: IMAGES OF EGYPTIAN ROYALTY FROM THE LOUVRE

Thirty works from the Louvre, focusing on kingship
and royal portraiture. Twenty-eight of the works have
never been seen in the U. S. Feb. 11-Apr. 14, 1996. The
Cleveland Museum of Art (216) 421-7340

DALLAS

ETERNAL EGYPT III: ANCIENT NUBIA.

Decorative objects, weapons, a tomb stele, and a group
of royal Nubian Ushabtis, on loan from The Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston. Ongoing. The Dallas Museum of
Art (214) 922-1200

KNOXVILLE

ANCIENT EGYPT: THE ETERNAL VOICE

Over 200 objects, featuring the mummy of Djed-
Khons-Iwef-Ankh. Ongoing. The Frank H. McClung
Museum, University of Tennessee (615) 974-2144.

LOS ANGELES

THE AMERICAN DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Comprehensive show of American excavations in Egypt
from 1900-1970. Nov. 5, 1995-Jan. 1996. Los Angeles
County Art Museum (213) 877-6111

NEW YORK

AN EGYPTIAN BESTIARY:

ANIMALS FROM ANCIENT EGYPT

Animal representations in various art forms. From the
permanent collection. Apr. 12-Oct. 15, 1995. The
Metropolitan Museum of Art (212) 879-5500

PHILADELPHIA

THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY: SECRETS AND SCIENCE

Ideas about life after death and health and disease pat-
terns. Ongoing University of Pennsylvania Museum of
Archaeology and Anthropology (215) 898-4000

SAN ANTONIO

MUMMIES: THE EGYPTIAN ART OF THE DEAD

Examination of the mummification process and of
elaborate works of art from the tombs. Through Sept.
1995. San Antonio Museum of Art (210) 978-8100

WASHINGTON, DC

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GLASS

Fifteen brilliantly colored glass objects from the collec-
tion of Charles Lang Freer. Ongoing. Freer Gallery of
Art Smithsonian Institution (202) 978-8100

ANCIENT NUBIA: EGYPT'S RIVAL IN AFRICA

Over 300 pieces on loan from the University of
Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and
Anthropology, Philadelphia, in bronze wood, faience.
May 24-Sept. 4, 1995. National Museum of African Art,
Smithsonian Institution (202) 357-1300

SYMPOSIA AND LECTURES

THE ORIGINS OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN STATE AND THE PRESERVATION OF ITS LEGACIES.

Two day symposium on origins of the state, empha-
sizing conservation of Egyptian monuments. Speakers are:
Dr. Farouk El-Baz, Dr. Zahi Hawass, Dr. Mark Lehner,
Dr. Fekry Hassen. Nov. 3- 5, U.C.L.A. Co-Sponsored by
ARCE/S.C. and The Center For Remote Sensing,
Boston University. For information or reservations:
Pat Swearingen (213) 874-8681 or Jeanette Longlad
(818) 768-1236.

THE 1995 SEASON IN MENDES AND SAKARA, EGYPT

Dr. David Silverman, Assoc. Curator of the Museum's
Egyptian Section, and Dr. Donald D. Redford, Visiting
Professor and Visiting Curator present a program on
their recent expeditions to Egypt. Oct. 31, 1995, 6 p.m.
University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology. Reservations: (215) 898-4890

EXCURSIONS

Ancient Egypt, the Sinai and Nubia: An Archeological
Adventure. Cairo, Luxor, Aswan plus a four day trip on
Lake Nasser. Dec. 16, 1995-Jan. 2, 1996. ARCE/SC.
For itinerary call David at Presidential World Tours and
Cruises 800 874-1811.